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Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 05060 200036Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 SCS-06 CA-01 HA-05 MCT-01
IO-13 ACDA-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 OPR-02 ARA-10 PC-01
/112 W
----------050760 200046Z /64
O 200014Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9829
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1547

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 5060

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CG
SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON KOLWEZI
REF: KINSHASA 5054 (NOTAL)

1. AT 2400 HOURS MAY 19 I MET WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR ROSS, WHO GAVE ME FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HE HAD JUST RECEIVED FROM PERSONAL DEBRIEFING OF COLONEL GRAS:

2. GRAS CONSIDERS OPERATION TOTAL SUCCESS FROM MILITARY STANDPOINT. BOTH THE NEW CITY AND THE OLD CITY - ENCOMPASSING VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE EXPATRIATE RESIDENTIAL AREA - ARE NOW UNDER THE CONTROL OF FRENCH FORCES. NOT YET UNDER THEIR CONTROL ARE THE "CITE" WHERE MOST ZAIRIANS LIVE; GECAMINES MINING COMPLEXES; AND THE AIRPORT. FOLLOWING DROP MORNING MAY 20 OF ADDITIONAL 350 PARAS - MAKING TOTAL OF ABOUT 800 - THOSE THREE ADDITIONAL AREAS COULD BE TAKEN "WITHOUT HELP FROM ANYONE ELSE" (READ BELGIANS). ROSS COMMENTED, HOWEVER, THAT IT MAY BE BETTER TO LEAVE "CITE"
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FOR FAZ TO ENTER.

3. ACCORDING TO GRAS, CITY IS IN TERRIBLE DISORDER, WITH EXTENSIVE DAMAGE IN ALL EUROPEAN AREAS. SOME SHOPS AND HOUSES HAD EVERY WINDOW BROKEN. EXPATRIATES DESCRIBED OCCUPATION AS "NIGHTMARE." MANY HAD RUN COMPLETELY OUT OF FOOD. ALL SAID THEY WANTED TO GET OUT AND NOT RETURN.

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4. MILITARY INFOR SAME AS REPORTED REFTEL. GRAS SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT WHATSOEVER THAT ORGANIZED KATANGAN UNITS HAD BEEN IN CITY. ROSS REPEATED DESCRIPTION OF MOTORIZED COMPANY OF "NON-AFRICANS" WHOM LOCAL RESIDENTS BELIEVED WERE CUBANS, ADDING THIS SHOULD BE CHECKED OUT FURTHER BY INTELLIGENCE.

5. COMMENT. BASED ON THIS VERY PRELIMINARY INFORMATION, SEEMS ATTACKERS' STRATEGY MAY HAVE BEEN TO OCCUPY KOLWEZI AS LONG AS POSSIBLE TO DO EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO INDUCE EXPATRIATES TO ABANDON THE CITY, THEREBY CRIPPLING THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY AND FORCING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO ITS KNEES. WHILE INITIAL EXPATRIATE REACTIONS INDICATE THIS STRATEGY MAY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER ALL WILL REALLY WANT TO LEAVE FOR GOOD ONCE SECURITY RESTORED. RE FOOD NEEDS, WE UNDERSTAND THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE STOCKS OF RATIONS AT KAMINA AND GOZ HAS ALREADY STARTED TO LINE UP SUPPLIES IN KIVU. WE WILL, HOWEVER, WANT TO TAKE CLOSER LOOK AT NEEDS TO SEE WHAT IF ANYTHING US MIGHT SUPPLY. ONE THING SEEMS INCREASINGLY CERTAIN: IT HAS BEEN A BAD SCENE AT KOLWEZI.
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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